



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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Seasonal Prohibition on Fishing for and Possession of Red, Black, Tiger, Yellowfin, and Yellowedge Grouper in U.S. Caribbean Federal Waters and Seasonal Closure of Grammanik Bank off St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands

Annual Seasonal Grouper Closure

NOAA Fisheries reminds fishermen and the public of the upcoming annual seasonal closure on fishing for, or possession of red, black, tiger, yellowfin, and yellowedge grouper in U.S. Caribbean federal waters. This closure begins at 12:01 a.m., local time, on February 1, 2016, and extends through April 30, 2016. This prohibition on possession does not apply to such grouper harvested and landed on shore prior to the closure.

Fishing Prohibitions in Grammanik Bank, U.S. Virgin Islands

From February 1 through April 30, each year, no person may fish for or possess any species of fish, **except highly migratory species**, within the Grammanik Bank closed area off St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands (Figure 1). The term “fish” means finfish, mollusks, crustaceans, and all other forms of marine animal and plant life other than marine mammals and birds. Highly migratory species includes bluefin, bigeye, yellowfin, albacore, and skipjack tunas; swordfish; sharks; white marlin, blue marlin, sailfish, and longbill spearfish.

The Grammanik Bank closed area is bounded by rhumb lines connecting, in order, the following points:

A	18°11.898' N	64°56.328' W
B	18°11.645' N	64°56.225' W
C	18°11.058' N	64°57.810' W
D	18°11.311' N	64°57.913' W
A	18°11.898' N	64°56.328' W

The closure encompasses the area where a yellowfin grouper spawning aggregation is reported to occur on Grammanik Bank.

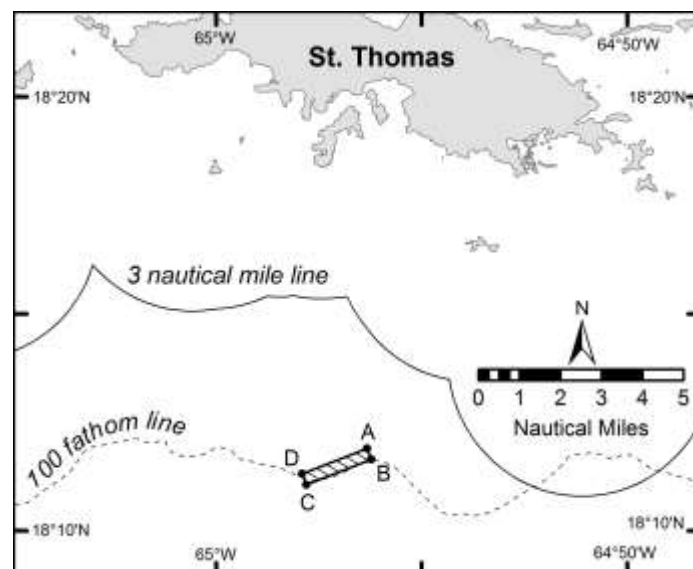


Figure 1. Map showing the Grammanik Bank seasonal closed area off St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands.

This bulletin provides only a summary of the information regarding the existing regulations. Any discrepancies between this bulletin and the regulations as published in the *Federal Register* will be resolved in favor of the *Federal Register*.